

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON  
THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR  
2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to S. Con. Res. 11.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 31, S. Con. Res. 11, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON  
THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 11) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time used for my opening statement not count against the budget resolution time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as the Republican leader mentioned, it is hard to believe that 5 years have gone by since we passed the Affordable Care Act—but it is true. It has been 5 years. We recall back to that cold winter day when we were able finally to get it done.

But to me it doesn't seem that long ago. The memories of what took place to get where we did to pass that are very fresh in my mind. It wasn't an easy feat. Presidents going back to Truman and Eisenhower had tried to pass legislation dealing with health care, and they were all unable to do it. So it was really a great accomplishment that Congress could pass this legislation.

It wouldn't be a stretch to say that President Obama risked his Presidency by pushing for health care reform. It was really a defining moment for many people.

Republican opposition at the time was overwhelming. No matter what we as Democrats did or tried to do, there was nothing we could do to get Republicans to join us in giving health care to the American people, even though the original health care bill we passed was patterned after Republican proposals. So we worked hard, and we got it done. We pled for help, and we got none. Republicans simply were not interested in working with us to fix our Nation's health care system.

Outside the Capitol, a sophisticated and dishonest public relations campaign costing huge amounts of money was being waged against ObamaCare by political operatives, lobbyists, insurance companies, and many others. We pressed on, and we did the very best we could, and it was pretty good. Was it perfect? Of course not. No legislation is. But what we eventually passed was and still is good for America.

I was very surprised to hear my friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, talk about a woman from Kentucky. That is very unusual, since 400,000 people in Kentucky today have insurance because of ObamaCare that they didn't have before.

Five years later, I am very proud of the work we did. I am just as proud today as I was when President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law. ObamaCare is reducing costs, expanding access, and protecting individuals with preexisting disabilities.

Look at just a few of the things it has done.

Some 16.4 million Americans now have quality health care coverage—16.4 million.

The United States has seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate—probably ever, but we will use just for purposes of illustration—in decades.

In the last 18 months, the uninsured rate for nonelderly adults has fallen by 35 percent. That is stunning.

Health care costs have grown at their slowest level in some 50 years.

Now listen to this. Patient safety initiatives are keeping Americans safe. Since we passed this legislation, the number of preventable deaths at hospitals and care centers has dropped by 50,000 people. That is 50,000 people who are alive today who wouldn't have been had it not been for ObamaCare. That is just one aspect of the people who are alive today because of ObamaCare who would not have been otherwise.

But for all of the incredible national statistics that are available, the best evidence that the Affordable Care Act is working can be found in our homes, our neighborhoods, and our communities.

This year in Nevada, ObamaCare is making a real difference in the lives of about 73,000 people who signed up for coverage through the health care insurance marketplace. Frankly, Nevada got off to a really slow start because they had a contract in the State with Xerox and they did such an awful job. The Republican Governor of the State of Nevada—I have applauded him in the past and I will do it again—was very courageous. He stepped forward and has made a huge difference in Nevada. Not only are Nevadans getting covered, but they are getting tax breaks, also. Some 65,000 Nevadans who selected a plan on the marketplace qualified for an average tax credit of \$242 per month. No matter what standard we use, that is real money in the pockets of Nevadans who are still recovering from the economic downturn because

of what happened on Wall Street. There are stories just like this all across America.

After 5 years, it is as clear as ever that the Affordable Care Act is working. Americans are benefiting from increased health coverage, lower costs, and improved efficiency.

Again, 16.4 million Americans have quality health coverage. Since 2013, the United States has seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate in decades. In the last 18 months, the uninsured rate for nonelderly adults has fallen by 35 percent. Health care costs have grown at their slowest rate in 50 years. Patient safety initiatives are keeping Americans safe. Since 2011, the number of preventable deaths at hospitals and care centers has dropped by 50,000.

The ranking member of the Budget Committee is on the floor today. One of the great things we do not talk much about in the Affordable Care Act is community health centers. The good man from Vermont, the junior Senator from Vermont, came to me and talked to me about community health centers. As a result of his advocacy, we put lots of money—about \$11 billion—in the Affordable Care Act for community health centers. It has changed the health care delivery system in America significantly. We must continue that program.

The Affordable Care Act, for all the reasons we have mentioned, is something that is really important. It is important that everyone understand how absolutely fantastic it was for the people of this country. After 5 years, it is clear it is working. Americans are benefiting from increased coverage, lower costs, and improved efficiency.

I invite my Republican colleagues to accept that ObamaCare is the law of the land. Put aside the unrealistic notions of repealing a law of which 16.4 million people now have health care. Are we going to just drop them, because the Republican plans would just basically drop them all?

Instead, Republicans should join with us to help even more Americans get the help they need. Perhaps, then, 5 years from now Democrats and Republicans can look back with pride, knowing that together we helped make a good law even better for all Americans.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I will begin by propounding some unanimous consent requests. I think these have been agreed to on both sides.

First, I ask unanimous consent that, for the duration of the Senate's consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, the majority and Democratic managers of the concurrent resolution, while seated or standing at the managers' desks, be permitted to deliver floor remarks, retrieve, review, and edit documents, and send email and other data communications from text displayed on wireless